

REMARKS

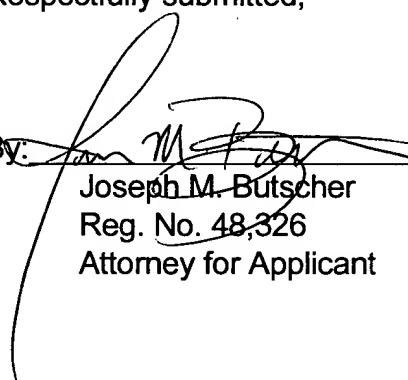
The present application includes pending claims 1-6, 8-16 and 18. Claims 8-12 have been allowed. Claims 1-3, 5, 6 and 13-15 stand rejected, while claims 4 and 16 have been objected to. Claims 1 and 13 have been amended as set forth above. Claims 4 and 16 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein. Reconsideration of the rejection of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 13-15 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,858,145 ("Sulich"). Claims 2-3 and 14-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sulich in view of United States Patent No. 5,714,728 ("Garneyer"). Claims 1-3, 5-6, 13-15 and 18 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Garneyer in view of United States Patent No. 5,086,861 ("Peterson").

The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims were patentable before the current amendments, which are shown above, for the reasons previously set forth during prosecution of the present application. The Applicant decided to amend the claims as set forth above so that all claims of the present application will be allowable, and a patent will issue in due course. Further, the claims were amended so that the time, effort, and costs associated with protracted prosecution will be reduced. The Applicant, however, reserves the right to explore additional claim coverage with the Examiner in a continuation application.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims define allowable subject matter. If anything remains in order to place the present application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any necessary fees or credit any overpayment to Applicants' Deposit Account 13-0017.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 22, 2003
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